

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 01101 280318Z

72

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
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R 271724Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1886

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1101

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO, ID

SUBJ: PORTUGUESE ATTITUDE TOWARDS TIMOR

REF: LISBON 1047; STATE 40593

1. RAISED SUBJECT OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR FEBRUARY 27 IN MEETING WITH MINISTER OF INTERTOERRITORIAL COORDINATION ALMEIDA SANTOS. USED FEBRUARY 25 UPI STORY DATED CANBERRA ON AUSTRALIAN WARNINGS TO INDONESIA TO RAISE SUBJECT. DID NOT INDICATE WE HAD ANY KNOWLEDGE OF AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO GOP.

2. SANTOS COMMENTED THAT TIMOR WAS "HIS LAST REMAINING PROBLEM." THE DIFFICULTY IN TIMOR STEMMED FROM ACTIVITIES BY HIGHLY POLLITICIZED GROUP OF PORTUGUESE ARMY OFFICERS. WITH THE REVOLUTION, HE SAID, MANY MILITARY OFFICERS THINK THEY CAN CONDUCT POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN ALL OF THE COLONIES.

3. SANTOS SAID GOI CONCERN, WHICH WAS UNDERSTANDABLE, STEMMED FROM FEAR THAT THE FRETELIN MOVEMENT WAS INFLUENCED BY CHINESE. GOP STRATEGY WOULD BE TO TRY TO ISOLATE THIS MOVEMENT AND DEAL WITH MORE MODERATE PARTIES.

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4. SANTOS SAID GOP TRYING TO ARRANGE MEETING IN EUROPE

WITH GOI TO DISCUSS COURSE OF ACTION RE TIMOR. BASIC STRATEGY WOULD BE TO CREATE INDEPENDENT ECONOMIC BASE BEFORE GRANTING POLITICAL SELF-DETERMINATION. THIS WAS A PROCESS THAT MIGHT TAKE 5, 6 OR EVEN 7 YEARS.

5. DURING THIS PERIOD GOP WOULD SEEK ECONOMIC AID FROM INDONESIA AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM AUSTRALIA. IT WOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT THIS AID DID NOT REPRESENT INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. OVER A PERIOD OF TIME SANTOS HOPED THAT AID PROGRAM WOULD CHANGE GOI IMAGE IN TIMOR. HE REPEATED THIS HOPE SEVERAL TIMES.

6. I ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF GOI NONETHELESS ELECTED USE OF FORCE AS WAS HINTED IN UPI STORY. SANTOS SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS AND SAID SIMPLY "WE WOULD SEND A SHIP AND BRING SMALL PORTUGUESE COLONY BACK TO THE METROPOLE."

7. COMMENT: WITH REGARD TO QUESTION POSED IN STATE 49593 SANTOS' VIEWS COINCIDED WITH OPINIONS GIVE ME BY AIR FORCE AND NAVY CHIEFS OF STAFF REPORTED LISBON 1047. COURSE OF ACTION HE OUTLINED PARALLELED THAT GIVEN TO AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR AND REPORTED STATE 42852.
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